

# STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR THE CITY OF RUTLAND FIRE DEPARTMENT

## EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT

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An applied research project submitted to the National Fire Academy as part of  
the Executive Fire Officer Program

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## **ABSTRACT**

Mark Wallace (1998) states that “a stagnant [fire] department is typified by frustrated and nonproductive members with low morale” (p.1). Today’s fire department needs to look and move in a forward direction. To move forward a department must have a vision and a plan to implement that vision- a strategic plan.

The problem that initiated this research project was that the City of Rutland Fire Department (RFD) did not have a strategic plan in place. Upon appointment to the position of Chief Engineer (Chief of Department), the author found that there was not one member of the department who could clearly state the mission or vision of the department.

The purpose of this research project was to examine the definition of strategic planning and how it applies to the fire service, to explore what benefits strategic planning has for a fire department, and what steps are necessary to develop and implement a strategic plan. This research project employed historical and evaluative research consisting of a literature review, seven-item survey, and telephone interviews to answer the following questions:

- 1) What is strategic planning and how does it apply to the fire service?
- 2) What are the benefits of strategic planning for fire departments?
- 3) What are the elements of an effective strategic plan?
- 4) What support does strategic planning have from the city managers or mayors of the cities/towns with career/combination fire departments in the State of Vermont?

5) What are the reasons career/combination fire departments in the State of Vermont do not have strategic plans?

The research found that strategic planning was an important tool for use in the fire service, but many departments did not have strategic plans in place. It identified the need for strategic planning and the steps necessary for a fire department strategic plan.

Recommendations were made to guide the RFD in the development and implementation of a strategic plan. These recommendations included preparing to plan; having the fire chief support the process and inviting city officials to participate in the process; formulating a vision for the RFD; utilizing *Fire Department Strategic Planning* (Wallace, 1998) as a guide to be used in the planning process; evaluation of the plan at regular intervals and adjustment as needed.

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## INTRODUCTION

Mark Wallace (1998) states that “a stagnant [fire] department is typified by frustrated and nonproductive members with low morale” (p. 1). Today’s fire department needs to look and move in a forward direction. Organizations must challenge their members to make the organization better tomorrow than it was today. A department that isn’t moving forward is dying or, at least is in danger of dying (Wallace).

To move forward, a department must have a vision and a plan to implement that vision. This plan should not just be used to defend an operating budget. It should be a strategic plan developed so that the organization can continue to be successful by providing necessary services in an efficient and effective manner (Ross, 1995).

The problem that initiated this research project was that the City of Rutland Fire Department (RFD) did not have a strategic plan in place. Upon appointment to the position of Chief Engineer (Chief of Department), the author found that there was not one member of the department who could clearly state the mission or vision of the department.

The purpose of this research project was to examine the definition of strategic planning and how it applies to the fire service, to explore what benefits strategic planning has for a fire department, and what steps are necessary to develop and implement a strategic plan. This research project employed

historical and evaluative research consisting of a literature review, seven-item survey, and telephone interviews to answer the following questions:

- 6) What is strategic planning and how does it apply to the fire service?
- 7) What are the benefits of strategic planning for fire departments?
- 8) What are the elements of an effective strategic plan?
- 9) What support does strategic planning have from the city managers or mayors of the cities/towns with career/combination fire departments in the State of Vermont?
- 10) What are the reasons career/combination fire departments in the State of Vermont do not have strategic plans?

## **BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE**

The City of Rutland Fire Department was founded in 1894. The RFD is one of only 13 career/combination fire departments in the State of Vermont (W. Babcock, personal communication, March 1, 1999). The remaining 224 fire departments are volunteer departments. For the period January 1, 1998 through December 31, 1998, the RFD responded to 1038 alarms. The majority of the alarms were rescue calls involving automobile accidents. Since its founding, the RFD has only had 9 chief engineers (M. Walsh, personal communication, March 16, 1999). One of those individuals served for 53 years as the chief engineer (Walsh).

In November 1997, the author was appointed to the position of Chief Engineer, the first chief engineer to be appointed from outside the ranks of the

RFD. Upon assuming command the author noted that there was no mission statement available, no defined vision, and foremost, no strategic plan, either written or implied. A fire department that knows where it is going knows the environment in which it must operate, and has identified how to get there, has the best chance of achieving its goals and desires (Wallace, 1998). The author believes that strategic planning is an important tool for fire service executives to enable fire departments to advance into the twenty-first century. Without proper planning, the RFD will not provide adequate or efficient service to meet the needs of the citizens it serves. Without strategic planning a department cannot move forward and will become stagnant.

This research project was completed according to the applied research requirements of the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program. It was prepared to satisfy the requirements associated with the *Executive Development* course. The *Executive Development* course of the Executive Fire Officer program assists fire service personnel in developing effective management and leadership skills as they make the transition from manager to senior executive (Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA], 1998). The course stresses the importance of planning, risk taking, and creativity. Strategic planning is an important aspect of a fire chief's duties if he or she is to lead their department forward. During the strategic planning process the fire executive can actively develop the qualities necessary to become an effective manager while contributing to the future effectiveness of the organization.



The results of this research will better enable the author to understand the concept of strategic planning, why departments may be reluctant to develop and implement a strategic plan, and what steps are necessary to initiate strategic planning in the RFD.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

A literature review was performed to identify existing research on the subject of strategic planning. The literature review involved a search of fire service trade journals and magazines, published research papers, and textbooks. Those sources relevant to this research project were summarized and grouped according to the applicable research areas.

### **Strategic Planning Defined**

Pfeiffer, Goodstein, and Nolan (1989) define strategic planning as “the process by which the guiding members of an organization envision its future and develop the necessary procedures and operations to achieve that future” (p.12). Strategic planning identifies and resolves issues facing the department (Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA]1995). Fire departments must look to the future and anticipate what actions will be required to adequately and efficiently deliver services to its customers. Planning is often referred to as anticipatory decision-making (Wright, 1997).

Coleman (1997) likens strategic planning to pole vaulting. “You have to get back far enough to get a run at the bar and you have to have the time,

flexibility, and upper body strength [your staff]" (p.24). Ross (1995) speaks of the process of matching services and activities with changed and changing environmental conditions when defining strategic planning. He further adds that strategic planning provides a framework for the improvement and restructuring of programs, management, collaborations, and evaluation of the organization's process.

In the May 1996 *Fire Engineers Journal*, Young states that strategic planning "is a process designed simply to ensure that organization's achieve success" (p.11). Strategic planning enables organizations to place themselves within the increasingly changing organizational environment.

Strategic planning determines where an organization should be going. It is a framework for carrying out strategic thinking, direction, and action leading to the achievement of consistent and planned results (Below, Morrissey & Acomb, 1987). Bryson (1988), when defining strategic planning, uses a format similar to other definitions, but further adds that it must be a disciplined effort.

### **Applications in the Fire Service**

In the past, strategic planning has been associated with for-profit organizations. Strategic planning in the public sector was primarily applied to military purposes (Bryson, 1988). It can be applied, though, to public agencies, departments, or major organizational divisions. Recent experience indicates that strategic planning approaches can help public organizations deal with their

dramatically changing environments, and thus helping them be more effective (Bryson).

Strategic planning is not a tool reserved for business and industry. It was not designed to help only for-profit companies (Fire, 1996). It should be used in any department or organization to increase success in activities. It can be used in both large and small departments. Strategic planning can be adapted for fire departments in existence, or yet to be invented (Fire).

### **Benefits of Strategic Planning**

It has been said, "Failure to plan is planning to fail" (unknown). To understand the benefits of strategic planning we need to look at what can happen to an organization without strategic planning. Disastrous effects may be the result of developing strategies without proper planning. As a result of improper planning, many departments make illogical decisions which affect operations, slow progress and cost the taxpayers thousands of dollars (Brown, 1996). Brown further states that "poor plans waste valuable time and generally lead to a decline in customer service" (p.1). Strategic planning provides the focus for decision-making and facilitates the orderly process of moving the organization toward its goals (Brown).

As fire departments move toward the next millennium, strategic planning will allow managers to identify and anticipate change (FEMA, 1995). When preparing for change, good planning will allow a department to build flexibility into its future and to prepare for change. Strategic planning should give management

the opportunity to ensure that the organization can define a vision of the future and then develop a range of objectives which, if successfully pursued, will enable the organization to achieve that vision (Young, 1996).

The Reedy Creek Emergency Services Department's strategic plan contains the following information:

The fire and emergency services have entered into a very competitive evolutionary cycle. Customer demands continue to increase, while dollars and adequate staff time continue to shrink. This trend places more pressure on the modern fire service manager and policy makers to come up with ways to be more efficient and effective. In many cases, the public demands the accomplishment of specific compliance goals, objectives and services, with fewer resources. In order to do a more efficient job with resources available, organizations must focus constructive efforts while eliminating projects and programs that do not serve the customer.

The Customer Centered Strategic Planning process has proven very effective [in addressing the above situations] in all types and sizes of organizations and, in our opinion, will serve as a model for the fire and emergency services for years to come (Hess, 1996, p.6).

A strategic plan will force an organization to meet its goals and use resources and, therefore, maximize its activities to meet the demands of the competitive evolutionary cycle. "What kind of organization can exist without being organized?" (Fire, 1996, p. 71).

Strategic planning requires broadscale information gathering, an exploration of alternatives, and an emphasis on the future implications of present decisions. Communication and participation can be facilitated through strategic planning and it can foster orderly decision making and successful implementation (Bryson, 1988). Strategic planning can improve organizational performance, and build teamwork and expertise. Morale in an organization may be improved through the strategic planning process.

### **Steps of Strategic Planning**

Various authors promote planning processes that may be eight, ten, or twelve steps (Wallace, 1998). Wallace started with a basic eight-step process and added additional steps that he felt were needed to have a strategic plan for the fire service. An eight-step plan outlined by Bryson in 1988 contained the following steps:

1. Initiating and agreeing on a strategic planning process
2. Identifying organizational mandates
3. Clarifying organizational mission and values
4. Assessing the external environment: opportunities and threats
5. Assessing the internal environment: strengths and weaknesses
6. Identifying strategic issues facing an organization
7. Formulating strategies to manage issues
8. Establishing an effective organizational vision for the future

Wallace (1998) outlines 12 steps in the strategic planning model for the fire service:

1. Identifying the department's values
2. Planning to plan strategically
3. Selecting and recommending a strategic planning process
4. Identifying the department's mandates
5. Developing the mission of the department
6. Creating a philosophy of operations
7. Assessing the opportunities and threats of the external environment
8. Assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the internal environment
9. Identifying the strategic issues of the department
10. Creating strategies for strategic issues
11. Creating the department's ideal future through proactive futuring
12. Operational planning from a strategic perspective

In the identification of a department's values, the definition of value that can be used is that it is "an enduring organization of beliefs concerning preferable models of conduct or end-states of existence along a continuum of relative importance" (FEMA, 1995, pp. 4-19).

Another term used in the strategic planning process is vision. Much has been written on vision. Developing a vision is difficult because our view of the world is limited by our perceptions of what is possible (FEMA, 1995). Peter

Senge (1990) in *The Fifth Discipline* identifies 7 learning disabilities that affect one's ability to create vision:

1. Focusing on your position or job.
2. Focusing on placing blame.
3. Having the illusion you are taking charge.
4. Being very adaptable rather than fixing the problem.
5. Fixing an event, rather than looking long-term.
6. Not learning from experience because we do not see the consequences of our actions.
7. Believing in the myth of the management team. Too often, instead of working together, team members are fighting for turf.

A vision statement describes what the department will be when it achieves its full potential. The vision statement should focus on a better future and encourage hopes and dreams. It should also:

1. Appeal to common values.
2. State positive outcomes.
3. Emphasize the strength of a unified group.
4. Use word pictures, images, and metaphors.
5. Communicate enthusiasm and excitement (Wallace, 1998).

Wright (1997) informs us that there is no creative tension without vision, and creative tension cannot be generated from current reality alone.

## **PROCEDURES**

This research project employed historical and evaluative research methodologies to examine strategic planning in organizations, with particular emphasis on strategic planning in the fire service. The procedures used to complete this research included a literature review, a survey, and personal interviews.

### **Literature Review**

The literature review was conducted at the National Fire Academy's Learning Resource Center during March 1999. Additional materials were supplied by the Learning Resource Center through the United States Postal Service. The author's personal library was used throughout the literature review process. The literature review targeted fire service trade journals and magazines, published research papers, and textbooks on the subject of strategic planning.

The literature review provided historical background regarding strategic planning in organizations, but also current information relative to strategic planning efforts that have been undertaken in the fire service. The literature review played a major role in the evaluation leading to the conclusions reached in the research project.



## **Survey**

An opinion survey was developed to assess the importance of strategic planning in the fire service. Two groups were selected for inclusion in the survey:

1. All career fire chiefs in the State of Vermont
2. City/Town Mayors/Managers employing career fire chiefs in the state of Vermont

A letter of introduction (Appendix A) and a survey instrument (Appendix B) were sent to 13 career fire chiefs and their city/town manager/mayor using the United States Postal Service. The survey instrument consisted of seven questions, and allowed respondents to provide additional comments concerning strategic planning in the fire service. In addition, strategic plans (Appendix C), mission statements (Appendix D) and vision statements (none submitted) were allowed to be submitted.

## **Interviews**

After the return of the survey instruments from the career fire chiefs, a brief telephone interview was conducted with each chief to ask the question “If you do not have a written strategic plan, why not?” This question was a direct result of the number of fire departments not having a strategic plan.

### **Assumptions and Limitations**

It was assumed that all respondents would answer honestly and directly. Since one-half of the survey population was known to the author through professional association, it was hoped they would wish to be cooperative and helpful, yet candid in their responses.

The major limitation on this study was the extremely small group of career fire chiefs. A second limitation was that the survey instrument was incomplete, requiring the use of a follow-up interview.

## **RESULTS**

Survey instruments were sent to two groups: 1) Career fire chiefs and 2) mayors/managers of cities/towns employing career fire chiefs. Of the 13 survey instruments sent to the career fire chiefs, all 13 were returned. This represents a 100% response rate. Of the 13 surveys sent to mayors/managers, only five instruments were returned. This represents only a 38% response rate. Appendix E contains the results of the survey instruments for the career fire chiefs. Appendix F contains the survey results for the mayors/managers. For purposes of reporting the results, strongly agree and agree were considered to be favorable responses while strongly disagree and disagree were considered to be unfavorable responses. A neutral response was considered to having no discernable opinion on the question.

## **1) What is strategic planning and how does it apply to the fire service?**

The literature review provided insight into strategic planning. Strategic planning in an organization is a process designed to ensure that an organization achieves success (Young, 1996). Strategic planning develops the necessary procedures and operations to achieve an envisioned future that is in a changing state. Strategic planning defines where an organization should be going, and how it will get there. It is a framework for the improvement and restructuring of programs, and an evaluation of the organization's process (Ross, 1995).

Strategic planning is not a tool reserved for business and industry. It should be used in the fire service, both in large and small departments. Experience indicates that strategic planning approaches can help public organizations deal with their dramatically changing environments, and thus helping them be more effective (Bryson, 1988).

Question # 2 of the strategic planning survey asked the respondents if strategic planning was an important tool for use in the fire service? 92% (12) of the career fire chiefs responded favorably. One answered with a neutral response. Of the mayors/managers who returned the survey, 100% responded favorably.

## **2) What are the benefits of strategic planning for fire departments?**

As a result of improper or no planning, fire departments may make illogical decisions which will affect operations, slow progress and cost taxpayers money (Brown, 1996). Strategic planning provides the focus for decision-making and facilitates the orderly process of moving the organization toward its goals (Brown). Strategic planning should give management the opportunity to ensure that the organization can define a vision of the future and then develop a range of objectives, which, if successfully pursued, will enable the organization to achieve that vision (Young). Fire departments are being asked to operate with less dollars in their budget. In order to operate more efficiently and effectively with fewer resources, strategic planning is needed.

Question #6 of the strategic planning survey asked if the respondents felt that strategic planning would benefit the fire department in its service delivery to the citizens of the community. 85% (11) of the career fire chiefs answered favorably. 15% (2) answered with a neutral response. 100% (5) of the mayors/managers answered favorably.

## **3) What are the elements of an effective strategic plan?**

An effective strategic plan for the fire service should consist of eight, ten, or twelve steps (Wallace, 1998). For the fire service, a 12-step plan should be used. The 12 steps in the strategic planning model for the fire service are:

1. Identifying the department's values.
2. Planning to plan strategically.
3. Selecting and recommending a strategic planning process.
4. Identifying the department's mandates.
5. Developing the mission of the department.
6. Creating a philosophy of operations.
7. Assessing the opportunities and threats of the external environment.
8. Assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the internal environment.
9. Identifying the strategic issues of the department.
10. Creating strategies for strategic issues.
11. Creating the department's ideal future through proactive futuring.
12. Operational planning from a strategic perspective.

Question #1 of the strategic planning survey asked if the fire department presently had a written strategic plan in place? Of the career fire chiefs that responded, only 38% (5) responded that they had a plan in place. 62% (8) answered that they did not have a plan. The mayors/managers responses agree with the career fire chiefs, but not all mayors/managers returned the survey. Of the five responses returned, 80% (4) stated that their fire department had a plan in place. 20% (1) stated that their department had no plan.

Question #3 asked if the strategic plan (if one exists) is available for examination by all members of the department and city/town officials? Based on the career chiefs' response of only five departments answering in the affirmative

regarding the presence of a strategic plan, 100% responded favorably. Of the four mayors/managers that responded that their fire department had a strategic plan, 75% (3) answered favorably, and 25% (1) answered with a neutral response.

Mission and vision statements are an integral part of the strategic planning process. Question # 4 of the survey asked the respondents if the mission of the fire department is clearly stated? 100% (13) of the career chiefs responded favorably. 80% (4) of the mayors/managers responded favorably, and 20% (1) answered with a neutral response.

In the strategic planning survey, Question #5 asked if the vision of the fire department is clearly stated? 53% (7) of the career chiefs answered favorably, 31% (4) answered unfavorably, and 15% (2) answered with a neutral response. Of the mayors/managers, 60% (3) answered favorably, and 40% (2) answered with a neutral response.

**4) What support does strategic planning have from the city manager or mayor of the cities/towns with career/combo fire departments in the State of Vermont?**

Question #6 of the survey asked if the respondents would be willing to commit the necessary resources (personnel and finances) to the development of a strategic plan for our fire department? 60% (3) of the mayors/managers answered favorably and 40% (2) answered with a neutral response.

**5) What are the reasons career/combination fire departments in the State of Vermont do not have strategic plans?**

In brief telephone interviews with the career fire chiefs in the State of Vermont, the overwhelming majority (7) of those without written strategic plans indicated that time and staffing resources were the reason that no plan was in place. The eighth chief was unfamiliar with strategic planning and that was the reason that none existed in his department.

**Summary Comments**

Summary comments by respondents revealed some perspectives on strategic planning. One respondent wrote, “a vision statement is nothing more than one person’s opinion. We all have one.” Another indicated that the city had started strategic planning on a citywide level, but as an individual department there was no time or resources to do strategic planning.

A third respondent felt that Vermont was “behind the eight ball” when it came to strategic planning. It is difficult to get resources for strategic planning and the individual felt that at the present time training was his priority.

One town manager responded that “the [strategic planning] link to the funding mechanism is critical to the overall success of the plan. Therefore, its presence and understanding by persons involved in the funding process is essential.”

## DISCUSSION

The results of this research clearly indicate the need for strategic planning. The author found agreement between the information in the literature review and the data received from the strategic planning survey. There is no question that the literature review supports the need, and that the career fire chiefs in the State of Vermont agree, that strategic planning is an important tool for the fire service. While further research must be conducted on the views of city/town mayors/managers due to the low rate of return of the survey instruments, those that did respond all felt that strategic planning was an important tool.

In looking at the surveys that were returned by the mayors/managers it appears that some are unfamiliar with the mission and vision statements of the fire department because of the neutral answers. There was one manager that responded with a neutral response when asked if the fire department had a strategic plan. If a department has a strategic plan, it should be shared with the executive of the city/town.

The strategic planning survey indicated that all of the departments had their missions clearly stated but there are departments that did not have vision statements. A strategic vision helps to identify the purpose of the organization, its uniqueness, and its priorities (Yukl, 1994). Strategic planning incorporates an organization's vision for where it is heading. To guide the organization toward its goal, the senior management must convey the corporate vision to the front-line employees (Brown, 1996).



The opportunity to establish or restate organizational values cannot be overlooked after major organizational changes take place in order to provide stability for employees (Shellhammer, 1996). The RFD has experienced such an organizational change with the hiring of the first fire chief from outside of the organization in its history.

While the overwhelming majority of respondents realize the value and need for strategic planning, the results of the survey indicate that many departments do not have a strategic plan. Time and personnel resources were the limiting factor according to the interviews conducted.

The RFD does not have a strategic plan in place, and there is no record of there ever having been one. Planning was short term, not well organized and pertained to short-term crisis or budget issues. There was no long-term planning performed.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the supporting information in the literature review, the results of the strategic planning survey and interviews, the following recommendations are made to guide the City of Rutland Fire Department in the development and implementation of a strategic plan:

1. The RFD should prepare to plan. A committee of members representing each shift as well as the chief and executive assistant chief should be formed. This should be a committee of volunteers.

2. The fire chief should fully support the process and should invite the mayor and Board of Alderman to also participate in and support the process. Financial support should be provided in the fire department's budget to support a strategic planning process.
3. The vision of the RFD should be formulated and conveyed to the members of the department, city officials, and the citizens of Rutland. To be successful, a strategic vision must reflect the values and aspirations of the management team as well as other members of the organization (Yukl, 1994).
4. Strategic planning using the 12 steps outlined by Mark Wallace in *Fire Department Strategic Planning* (1998) should be adopted as a guide to be used in the planning process.
5. Once developed, the strategic plan must be available for review by all members. This can be accomplished through department meetings and training sessions. The strategic plan must be evaluated at regular intervals and adjusted as necessary.

Strategic planning is an important tool to be used in the fire service. A tool as important as any tool that may be carried on the fire apparatus for use at emergency operations. Without strategic planning there might not be any tools on the apparatus. Obadal (1998) indicates that strategic planning is needed when the traditional ways of doing things are becoming less effective, or where there is no agreement on where the organization is headed. The RFD meets

these criteria. The author believes that by the implementation of the above recommendations, the RFD will be better able to meet the challenges of the future, and better serve the citizens of the City of Rutland.

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Prentice Hall

# **APPENDIX A**



CITY OF RUTLAND  
VERMONT 05701

FIRE DEPARTMENT  
CRAIG H. SHELLEY  
CHIEF ENGINEER  
(802) 773-1812

January 26, 1999

Dear [Mayor],

The City of Rutland Fire Department is in the process of evaluating the need for strategic planning. As part of a research project in conjunction with the Executive Fire Officer Program of the National Fire Academy, I am conducting a survey entitled "Strategic Planning for the Fire Service", a copy of which is enclosed with this letter.

I would ask you to complete this survey, and return it to me at your earliest convenience, but no later than February 15, 1999, in the pre-addressed, stamped envelope provided. The information gathered will be combined with information submitted by other career fire departments and city/town managers within the State of Vermont. Your fire department and city/town will not be identified by name. I would ask, though, that you complete the survey independently so that the information submitted reflects your knowledge and views.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (802) 773-1812.

Sincerely,

CRAIG SHELLEY  
Chief Engineer  
City of Rutland Fire Department  
Enclosure (1)

*"Courage, Commitment, Compassion"*



## **APPENDIX B**

### **Strategic Planning for the Fire Service**

The purpose of this survey is to assess the importance of strategic planning in the career fire service in the State of Vermont, as perceived by the Chief of Department and the city/town mayor/manager. The results of this survey will be included in an applied research project for the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program. Your department and city/town will not be identified by name. Please answer the following questions:

**Directions:** Where a yes or no answer is required, please place an 'X' in the appropriate space to indicate your answer. In response to other statements, please circle the most appropriate choice.

Please state your position within the organization or the municipal government.

\_\_\_\_\_

Type of department (circle one) Career                      Combination

Size of department \_\_\_\_\_

Size of population served \_\_\_\_\_

1. Does your fire department presently have a written strategic plan in place?  
                     \_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No                      \_\_\_\_\_ Unknown
2. Strategic planning is an important tool for use in the fire service.  
                     Strongly Agree    Agree    Neutral    Disagree    Strongly Disagree
3. Our fire department's strategic plan (if one exists) is available for examination by all members of the department and city/town officials.  
                     Strongly Agree    Agree    Neutral    Disagree    Strongly Disagree
4. The mission of the fire department is clearly stated.  
                     Strongly Agree    Agree    Neutral    Disagree    Strongly Disagree
5. The vision of the fire department is clearly stated.  
                     Strongly Agree    Agree    Neutral    Disagree    Strongly Disagree
6. Strategic planning will benefit the fire department in its service delivery to the citizens of the community.  
                     Strongly Agree    Agree    Neutral    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

7. I am willing to commit the necessary resources (personnel and finances) to the development of a strategic plan for our fire department.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

Please feel free to enter any additional comments that you may have concerning strategic planning for the fire service.

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Additionally, please enclose a copy of your strategic plan, mission statement, and/or vision statement.

## **APPENDIX C**

**PROPOSED GOALS  
FOR THE MONTPELIER  
FIRE AND AMBULANCE DEPARTMENT**

**GOALS**

- I. Enhance the ability of the Montpelier Fire and Ambulance Department to provide quality service through development of professional staff.
- II. Develop and implement an organizational structure that will allow the Montpelier Fire and Ambulance Department to accomplish its mission with optimal efficiency and that will cause the Department to function with a teamwork concept.
- III. Support safety of firefighters and the public they serve by maintaining equipment, technology, and facilities necessary to support the activities of the Department.
- IV. Encourage and expand Call Force utilization and membership growth.
- V. Expand the ambulance service to become the Emergency Medical Service for Washington County communities which do not have their own EMS.
- VI. Improve Montpelier Fire and Ambulance Department effectiveness by developing programming for pre-fire planning of all existing public and commercial properties within the City.
- VII. Promote fire safety and prevention in the community through educational programming and community service promotions.
- VIII. Provide educational programming to the community concerning emergency medical care and health maintenance.
- IX. Review all existing and proposed programs for revenue generating ability to supplement the revenues of the Department. Actively develop such programs.
- X. Create community awareness of Fire and Ambulance Department activities and programs.

**GOAL I. ENHANCE THE ABILITY OF THE MONTPELIER FIRE AND  
AMBULANCE DEPARTMENT TO PROVIDE QUALITY SERVICE  
THROUGH DEVELOPMENT OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF.**

**ONGOING STRATEGIES**

- A. Develop a fire suppression training program to include advanced training through certification by State and national fire academies as well as continued in-station training.
- B. All career firefighters below the rank of Assistant Fire Chief will have achieved a minimum VT EMS Certification of basic EMT by July 6, 1995. A minimum of 75% of the career firefighters below the rank of Assistant Fire Chief will have a VT EMS Certification of EMT-D.
- C. Develop level of service criteria for Fire and Ambulance Services.
- D. Institute Emergency Care Attendant Certification Program for Dispatchers with recertification means.

**1995 STRATEGIES**

**FUTURE STRATEGIES**

**GOAL II. DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT AN ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE THAT WILL ALLOW THE MONTPELIER FIRE AND AMBULANCE DEPARTMENT TO ACCOMPLISH ITS MISSION WITH OPTIMAL EFFICIENCY AND THAT WILL CAUSE THE DEPARTMENT TO FUNCTION WITH A TEAMWORK CONCEPT.**

**ONGOING STRATEGIES**

- A. Provide a career ladder and create an advancement procedure within the Department.
- B. Institute an incentive program for employees of the Department who achieve specified designations and certifications.
- C. Structure the use of trained firefighters to provide safe and rapid response to alarms by having four (4) trained firefighters on the fire scene as standard first response.

**1995 STRATEGIES**

- Priority 1. Four (4) Assistant Chiefs shall be considered management and removed from the Union through petition of the City.
- Priority 2. Create an announced assessment center process for the position of Fire Lieutenant. Promote Fire Lieutenants from within the Department. A salary increase shall be awarded to these Lieutenants.
- Priority 3. Complete a pay study.
- Priority 4. All EMT-D firefighters shall be awarded an increase in pay as long as they achieve and maintain this State level of certification. All firefighter EMT's shall be awarded a salary increase as long as they achieve and maintain this State level of certification.
- Priority 5. Structure shift configuration to facilitate having four (4) people as a first response on the fire scene.

**FUTURE STRATEGIES**

**GOAL III. SUPPORT SAFETY OF FIREFIGHTERS AND THE PUBLIC  
THEY SERVE BY MAINTAINING EQUIPMENT, TECHNOLOGY,  
AND FACILITIES NECESSARY TO SUPPORT THE ACTIVITIES  
OF THE DEPARTMENT.**

**ONGOING STRATEGIES**

- A. Equip all firefighters (career and call force) with equipment in compliance with NFPA 1500 recommendations.
- B. Call for a commitment to either renovate or replace the fire station. Commitment to be made by December 31, 1994.
- C. Consider alternatives to call box alarm system including replacement or removal of the existing system.
- D. Support enhanced 911 service.

**1995 STRATEGIES**

- Priority 1. Update computer program for ambulance billing procedure.
- Priority 2. Institute a replacement system for SCBA and fire fighting protective gear.
- Priority 3. Address NFPA 1500 rules and regulations for firefighter safety and develop and implement actions necessary to comply.
- Priority 4. Review firehouse facility for feasibility of building a substation rather than replacing the existing main fire station. The substation could be built on donated or on City property and could house fire equipment as well as ambulance and/or transfer equipment.
- Priority 5. Study possibility of emergency phone communications system as an alternative to the call box system.



#### **GOAL IV. ENCOURAGE AND EXPAND CALL FORCE UTILIZATION AND MEMBERSHIP GROWTH.**

##### **ONGOING STRATEGIES**

- A. Develop a Call Force Mission Statement.
- B. Recruit new members for the call force to cause the force to maintain twenty (20) call personnel.
- C. Develop additional member benefits and educational programs to increase call force member satisfaction to make membership more desirable to perspective members.
- D. The call force may serve as a resource from which to hire for any future openings in the Montpelier Fire Department.

##### **1995 STRATEGIES**

- Priority 1. Write a clear Call Force Mission Statement.
- Priority 2. Increase paid call force to twenty-five (25) firefighters by the end of 1995.
- Priority 3. Supply call force firefighters with individual beepers to allow a reliable system of immediate notice for emergency calls.
- Priority 4. Complete a study for call force potential benefits including some form of retirement.

##### **FUTURE STRATEGIES**

**GOAL V. EXPAND THE AMBULANCE SERVICE TO BECOME THE  
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE FOR WASHINGTON COUN-  
TY COMMUNITIES WHICH DO NOT HAVE THEIR OWN EMS.**

**ONGOING STRATEGIES**

- A. The per capita fee being charged communities served by the Montpelier Ambulance Service shall be adjusted based on an annual review of actual costs. This will create a business relationship through contracts with interested communities.
- B. Level of service and level of care goals shall be defined for this service in writing and shall be reviewed annually.
- C. Continue and improve transfer service component within the Ambulance Service.

**1995 STRATEGIES**

- Priority 1. Non-emergency transfers should be scheduled Monday-Friday during specified times to the extent that is feasible. The schedule should be made available to doctors, hospitals, and nursing homes.
- Priority 2. Either refurbish the existing ambulance scheduled to be traded in or purchase a reasonably priced newer ambulance to be used for transfers.
- Priority 3. Define level of service and level of care to be implemented this year. (See below proposed goals for EMS).
- Priority 4. Market and promote the transfer service.

**FUTURE STRATEGIES**

**GOAL VI. IMPROVE MONTPELIER FIRE AND AMBULANCE DEPARTMENT EFFECTIVENESS BY DEVELOPING PROGRAMMING FOR PRE-FIRE PLANNING OF ALL EXISTING PUBLIC AND COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES WITHIN THE CITY.**

**ONGOING STRATEGIES**

- A. Pre-fire planning should include as many active Montpelier firefighters as deemed practicable by the Fire Chief.
- B. Identify areas in the City that require water for fire suppression to be transported in tankers.
- C. Conduct periodic fire inspections of all commercial properties in the City for the purpose of identifying existing and potential fire hazards.
- D. Prepare reports to include recommendations to correct potential hazards. A copy of this report is to be provided to the owner or manager, and these reports will be of public record.

**1995 STRATEGIES**

- Priority 1. Pre-fire plans will be developed for all commercial properties.
- Priority 2. Maintain an open line of communication with the Public Works Department for flow tests on hydrants and other water supply issues.

**FUTURE STRATEGIES**

**GOAL VII. PROMOTE FIRE SAFETY AND PREVENTION IN THE COMMUNITY THROUGH EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING AND COMMUNITY SERVICE PROMOTIONS.**

**ONGOING STRATEGIES**

- A. Provide meaningful targeted information to the community on life preservation in a fire and on fire prevention through a program of courses and informational presentations.
- B. Maintain and upgrade the Federally mandated Hazardous Material inventory which includes type, quantity and location.

**1995 STRATEGIES**

- Priority 1. Continue in-school programs.
- Priority 2. Expand adult education program to service clubs, etc.
- Priority 3. Restructure to respond to demands of H.50, which deals with hazardous materials.

**FUTURE STRATEGIES**

**GOAL VIII.        PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING TO THE  
COMMUNITY CONCERNING EMERGENCY MEDICAL  
CARE AND HEALTH MAINTENANCE.**

**ONGOING STRATEGIES**

- A.    Provide meaningful targeted information to the communities we serve annually on emergency medical care and health maintenance through a program of course offerings and informational presentations.
- B.    Develop/institute employee and citizen CPR Certificate Program with annual recertification means.
- C.    Develop/provide general First Aid classes to select population groups with recertification means.
- D.    Develop/institute program for Elderly Safety in the Home.
- E.    Develop/institute weekly emergency informational releases for general population via all media.
- F.    Develop/institute specific talks and classes for civic groups.

**1995 STRATEGIES**

**FUTURE STRATEGIES**

**GOAL IX. REVIEW ALL EXISTING AND PROPOSED PROGRAMS FOR REVENUE GENERATING ABILITY TO SUPPLEMENT THE REVENUES OF THE DEPARTMENT. ACTIVELY DEVELOP SUCH PROGRAMS.**

**ONGOING STRATEGIES**

- A. Develop ambulance transfer service as a revenue producing entity to at least meet actual costs of operation.
- B. Institute and impose ordinances to charge service fees to non-tax institutions based on actual costs incurred.
- C. Building plans reading in conjunction with State Department of Labor and Industry with fee schedule to be based on a per square foot of proposed structure. Create an annual Business Inspection Program also on a fee basis.
- D. Utilize existing Federal guidelines pertaining to hazardous materials spills and violations with appropriate charges.

**1995 STRATEGIES**

- Priority 1. Create building inspection program for commercial and business properties in a systematic fashion.
- Priority 2. Institute penalty fee structure for responses to false alarms.
- Priority 3. Review EMS ambulance and transport rates to reflect actual costs of services provided including time, overtime, vehicles, vehicle maintenance and replacement, administration, and supplies.
- Priority 4. Institute an ordinance to allow charges for violations in the handling, storage, or transportation of hazardous materials. (See proposed draft below).
- Priority 5. Institute charges for programs offered such as CPR to offset costs to implement program.
- Priority 6. Reimbursement for costs incurred while performing fire suppression activities on Federal properties through Federal property reimbursement agreement.

- Priority 7. Institute ordinance to impose service fees on non-tax institutions and develop a formula considering a use fee structure/or/required insurance rider/or/district utility fee.

#### FUTURE STRATEGIES

- If cause and origin is found to be in violation of City Fire Codes, fines shall be charged to the owner or occupant of the building as appropriate.
- As part of sentencing for convicted arsonists, compensate the Fire Department for any expenses incurred during fire suppression activities.
- Pursue and study alternative funding, e.g. grants.

**GOAL X. CREATE COMMUNITY AWARENESS OF FIRE AND AMBU-  
LANCE DEPARTMENT ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS.**

**ONGOING STRATEGIES**

- A. Hold open houses at the fire station on a periodic basis.
- B. Generate a newspaper column to be submitted on a regular basis to create awareness of Department activities as well as in combination with public education goals.
- C. Bring vehicles and staff out into the community when doing routine activities to generate additional visibility.



## APPENDIX D

## **City of Rutland Fire Department's Mission Statement**

The City of Rutland Fire Department is committed to provide dependable service in a professional manner while showing compassion for those in need. We will protect lives, property, and the environment through fire suppression, emergency services, hazardous materials mitigation, fire prevention, and community education.

The Department will be a progressive, service-oriented organization that provides innovative and effective leadership through our ongoing education and training.

The City of Rutland Fire Department....

***“Courage, Commitment, Compassion”***



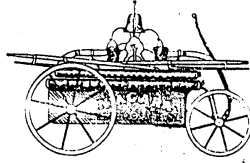
## BRATTLEBORO FIRE DEPARTMENT

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### **Mission Statement**

**Our essential mission and number one priority as members of the Brattleboro Fire Department is to deliver the best possible services to the citizens of Brattleboro.**

**We will strive to effectively protect life and property from the effects of fire and all other emergencies, and will continually look for ways to improve our services to the people we serve.**



## WINDSOR FIRE DEPARTMENT

### ***MISSION STATEMENT***

- TO ATTAIN AND MAINTAIN A POSITIVE, PRODUCTIVE & PROFESSIONAL: PERSONAL AND PUBLIC PRESENCE. BUILT ON THE PRECEPTS OF TEAMWORK, TRAINING, EDUCATION AND DEDICATION.
- PROTECTING THOSE WE SERVE FROM THE PERILS OF FIRE, EMERGENCY MEDICAL, HAZARDOUS MATERIAL AND NATURAL DISASTER EMERGENCIES.
- UTILIZING PROGRESSIVE, STATE OF THE ART METHODS, DELIVERED BY TRAINED, CONFIDENT, AGGRESSIVE PERSONNEL.

**PROPOSED MISSION STATEMENT  
FOR THE MONTPELIER  
FIRE AND AMBULANCE DEPARTMENT**

**MISSION STATEMENT**

The Mission of the Montpelier Fire and Ambulance Department is to save lives, protect property, and preserve the tax base in the City of Montpelier for its residents and businesses at reasonable and acceptable cost.

The Montpelier Fire and Ambulance Department shall develop expertise in necessary fields while providing **fire suppression, fire prevention, fire building inspections, hazardous materials first responses, natural disasters responses, multi-environment rescues, public safety awareness programs, emergency medical care, transportation of the sick and injured, and emergency medical public education.** The Montpelier Fire and Ambulance Department shall also assist those other agencies who require their expertise related to it's Mission.

Commanded by a Fire Chief, this Department shall be comprised of sufficient career and paid call personnel to safely accomplish this Mission. The Montpelier Fire and Ambulance Department shall be augmented by a Mutual Assistance Agreement with surrounding communities with the common goal of saving lives and protection of property. The Montpelier Fire and Ambulance Department members shall be physically, mentally, and technologically prepared to meet the Mission requirements and shall maintain this level of readiness through a standardized training program.

# Bellows Falls Fire Department

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170 Rockingham St.  
Bellows Falls, VT 05101

*Fire Chief*  
*William Weston*

Phone: (802) 463-4343  
Fax: (802) 463-3131

March 13, 1996

TO: All Department Personnel

FROM: Chief William Weston

RE: Department Mission Statement

The following is an organizational "Mission Statement" for the Bellows Falls Fire Department. All personnel associated with the Department must be familiar with it. This mission Statement will provide all employees with a sense of direction of the organization as well as providing a base line for all Department operations.

**The members of the Bellows Falls Fire Department are a TEAM of dedicated firefighters that work and train together to protect lives and property whenever we are called to duty both inside and outside our community.**

**To be able to accomplish this mission we strive to become increasingly knowledgeable and provide a high level of service to the best of our ability regarding Public Education, Fire Inspection and Prevention, Fire Suppression, Rescue, Emergency Medical Service, Disaster and Hazardous Materials Response and any related activities.**

**We will always work towards maintaining a POSITIVE working relationship with in the department, with the community we serve and with all agencies we work with in the performance of our duties.**

**We will strive to provide services to the best of our ability, always represent the department in a positive manor and act as role models for the residents of our community.**

# BURLINGTON FIRE DEPT



## MISSION STATEMENT

**THE MISSION OF THE BURLINGTON FIRE DEPARTMENT IS TO PROVIDE THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF LIFE AND PROPERTY SAFETY THROUGH THE EXTENSION OF FIRE PREVENTION, EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES, FIRE CONTROL AND PUBLIC EDUCATION SERVICES.**

**ST. JOHNSBURY**  
36 MAIN STREET



**FIRE DEPARTMENT**  
ST. JOHNSBURY, VT. 05819  
(802) 748-8924

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The St. Johnsbury Fire Department is a combination fire/rescue system with Firefighters in the career and call ranks. Each member is sworn to uphold the provisions of municipal government in order to protect the lives and property of all Residents and Visitors to the Town of St. Johnsbury.

The Fire Department is a central element in our local government's effort to promote life safety by coordinating the efforts of its special teams dealing with fire suppression, rescue, emergency medical services, hazardous materials, public education and the development and enforcement of ordinances and fire codes.

To our Municipal Government, we pledge to uphold our responsibilities for fire and life safety as outlined in the Vermont Fire Service Statutes and the Town Charter. We will continue our quest for the most progressive and life-preserving measures available by promoting the use of technology and its involvement in the everyday lives of our Citizens. We will continue our service delivery goals by providing the highest level of fire and rescue protection with maximum efficiency while operating within the limits of existing resources.

To the Citizens we protect, we pledge to provide twenty-four hour a day protection from the devastation of fire, medical emergencies, natural and man-made disasters. Beyond the immediate crisis, the Fire Department will continue to promote fire safety education to all Citizens, from adolescents to adults. We will also continue our aggressive approach toward the legislation of new technologies which promote residential safety and reduce the risk to all families in the Town of St. Johnsbury.

To our members, the Management of the Fire Department pledges to uphold the traditions of the Fire Service by never sacrificing the safety of its members, Career and Call. We will continue to take an aggressive approach to the fire problem through education and training for all members in the Department, and will remain a proactive and progressive force for the betterment of the Fire Service on a national level.



### MISSION STATEMENT

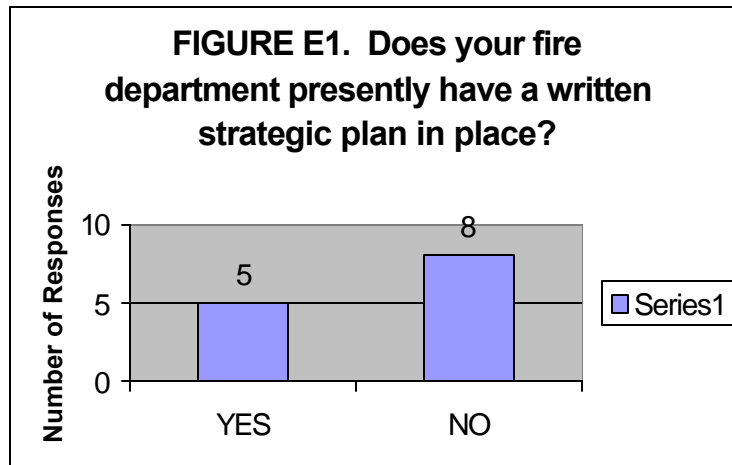
The Hartford Fire Department's mission is to save lives and protect property in order to provide a quality of life consistent with the requirements of the residents of the Town of Hartford.

The department shall respond and function with developed expertise, when directed, in the fields of suppression, prevention, emergency medical services, hazardous materials, multi-environment rescue and to assist those other agencies who might require its help within the mission scope.

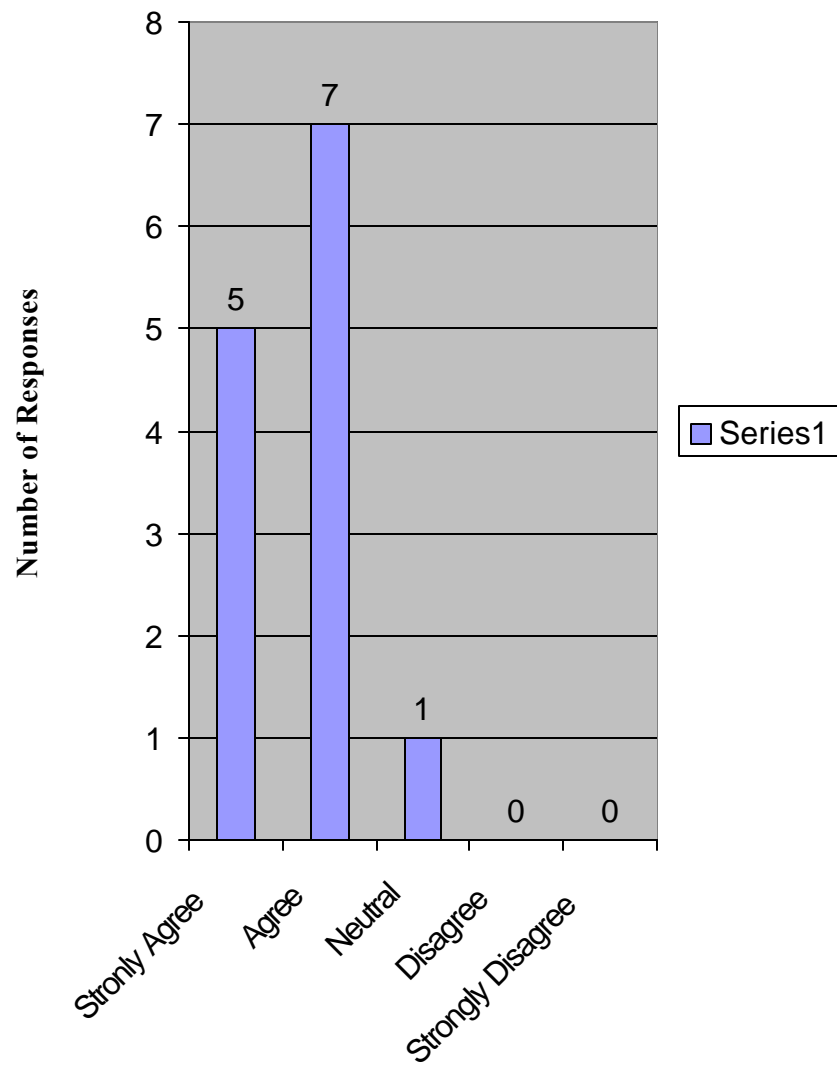
Commanded by a Fire Chief, the department shall be comprised of sufficient career and paid/call personnel as necessary to meet mission needs.

Its members shall be physically, mentally and technologically prepared for meeting mission needs and shall maintain this level of readiness through regularly scheduled monthly drills and by taking advantage of such externally provided training as is applicable.

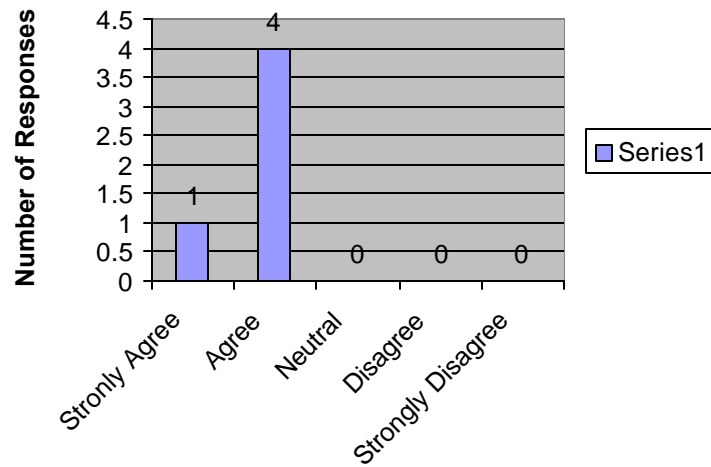
## **APPENDIX E**

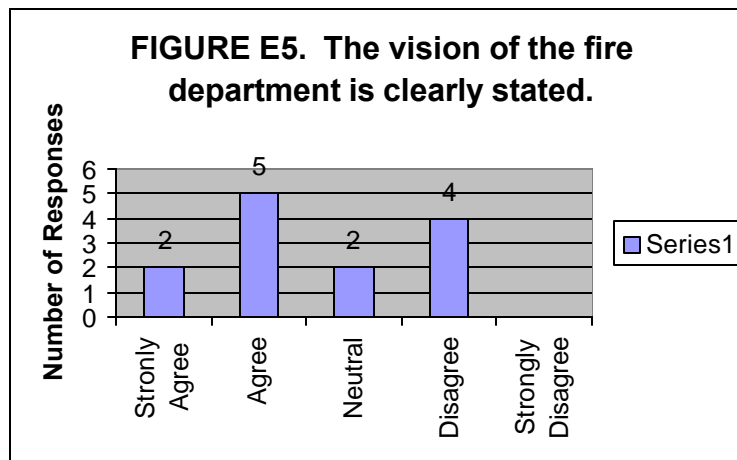
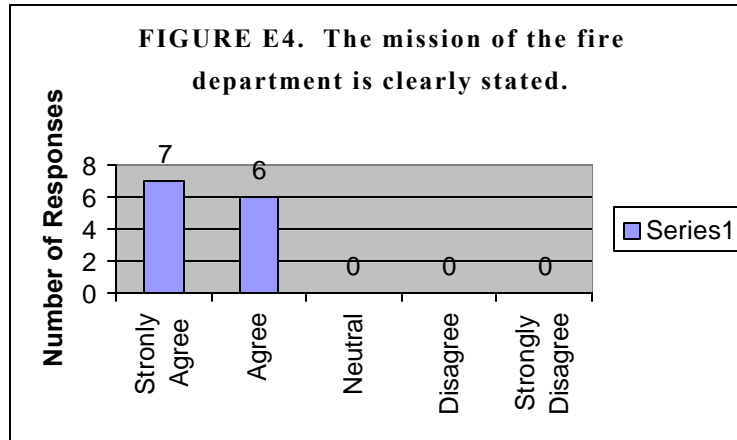
**Career Fire Chief Responses to Survey**

**FIGURE E2. Strategic planning is an important tool for use in the fire service.**

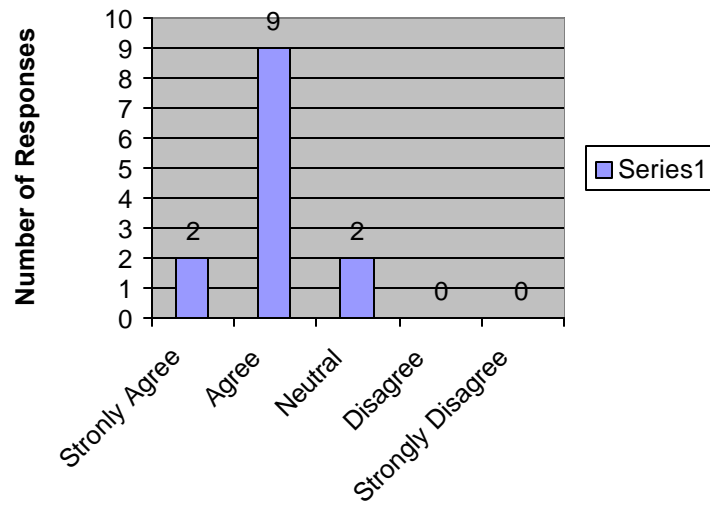


**FIGURE E3. Our fire department's strategic plan (if one exists) is available for examination by all members of the department and city/town officials.**

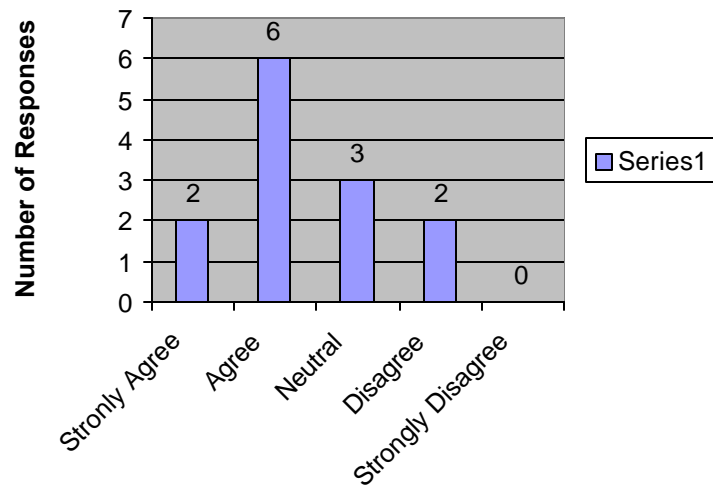




**FIGURE E6. Strategic planning will benefit the fire department in its service delivery to the citizens of the community.**

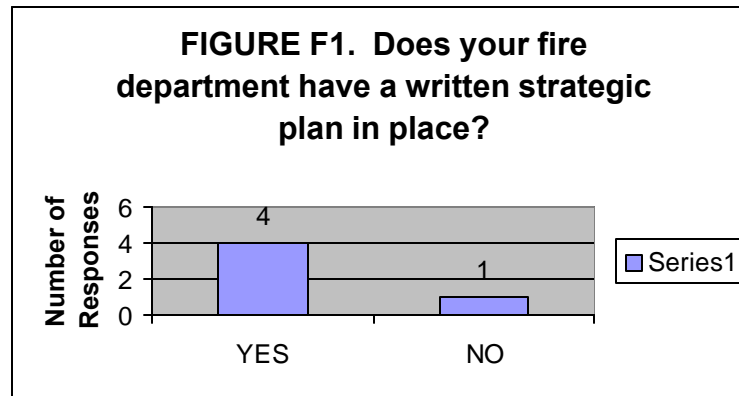


**FIGURE E7. I am willing to commit the necessary resources (personnel and finances) to the development of a strategic plan for our fire department.**

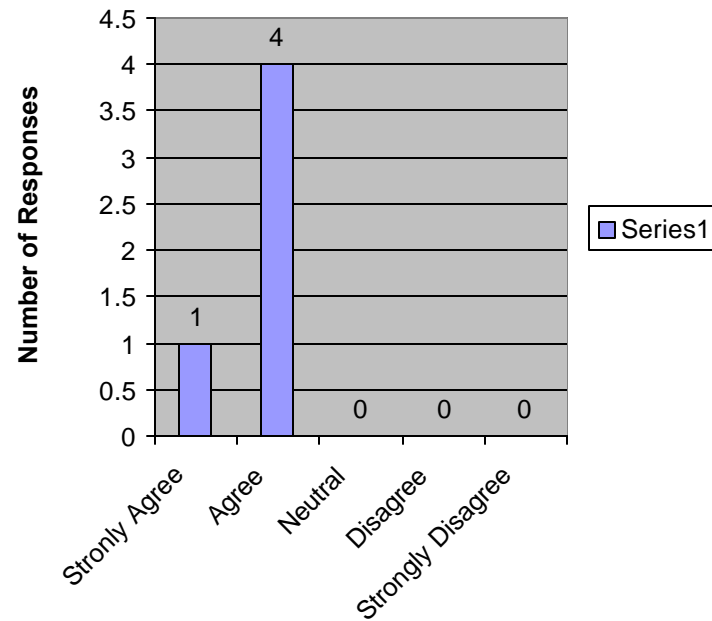




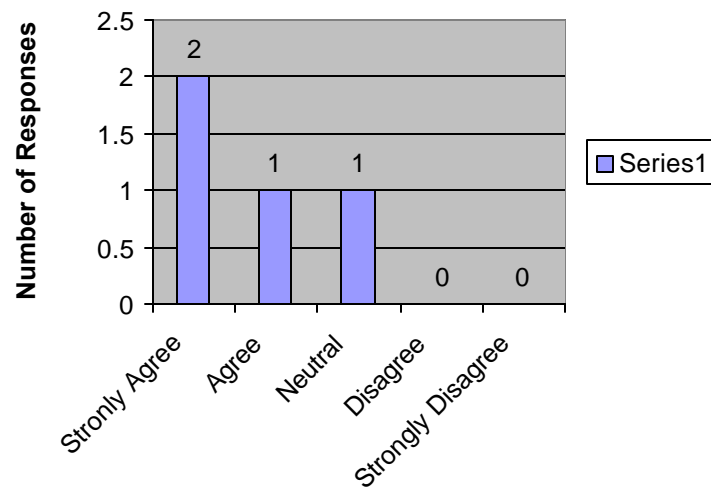
## **APPENDIX F**

**Mayors/managers Survey Responses**

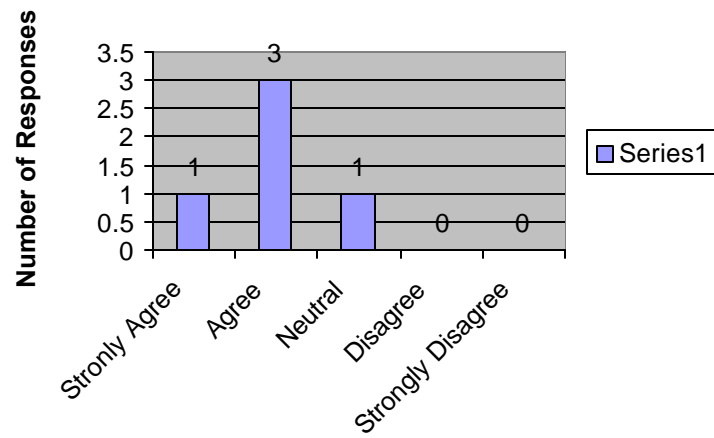
**FIGURE F2. Strategic planning is an important tool for use in the fire service.**



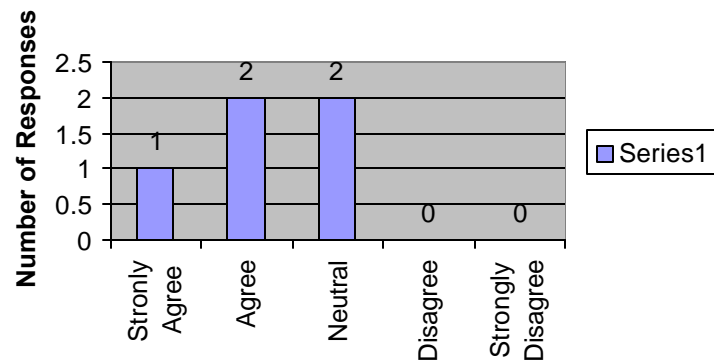
**FIGURE F3. Our fire department's strategic plan (if one exists) is available for examination by all members of the department and city/town officials.**



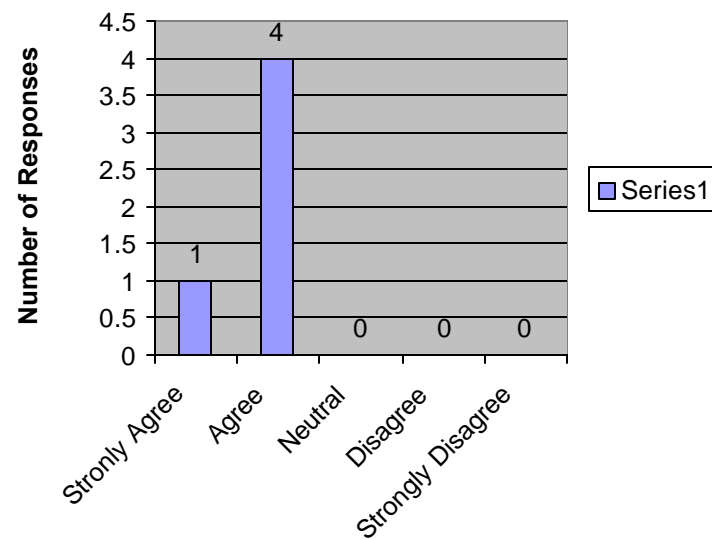
**FIGURE F4. The mission of the fire department is clearly stated.**



**FIGURE F5. The vision of the fire department is clearly stated.**



**FIGURE F6. Strategic planning will benefit the fire department in its service delivery to the citizens of the community.**



**FIGURE F7. I am willing to commit the necessary resources (personnel and finances) to the development of a strategic plan for our fire department.**

